

August 25, 1954

Dr. Ellis Englesberg  
Hooper Foundation  
U. California Medical Center  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Ellis:

I have received a letter from a Dr. R. Devignat, who works on *Pasteurella pestis* at Elisabethville, Belgian Congo. He writes that he has been studying three distinct natural varieties, and, more to the point, that he has some experiments with them that suggest the occurrence of genetic recombination among the strains. His characters are virulence, on the one hand, and biochemical traits such as glycerol fermentation, nitrate reduction, etc., on the other. He says very little about controls on the stability of the markers, but by and large he seems to be appreciative of the pitfalls.

At any rate, Devignat "pourrait mettre a (ma) disposition une serie de souches des trois varietes sous leur forme tres virulente, sous forme attenuée, et vaccinante, sous forme attenuée et a peine vaccinante, de meme que les souches dont les colonies ont des morphologies différentes... y joindre les hybrides dont question ci-dessus et donner des details concernant les conditions de culture qui m'ont parus les plus favorables a l'apparition des hybrides ou a leur detection." He acknowledges that his own lab. facilities are quite mediocre, and appears understandably quite anxious to have his observations confirmed and extended elsewhere.

It is quite obvious that you would be far more competent than I (or anyone else I can think of) to render such a service, and I hoped that your interest would be comparable. May I reply to Devignat that I have discussed this with you and that you have assented to examine his material?

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

P.S. We will be at Woods Hole to about September 3, then back to Madison.